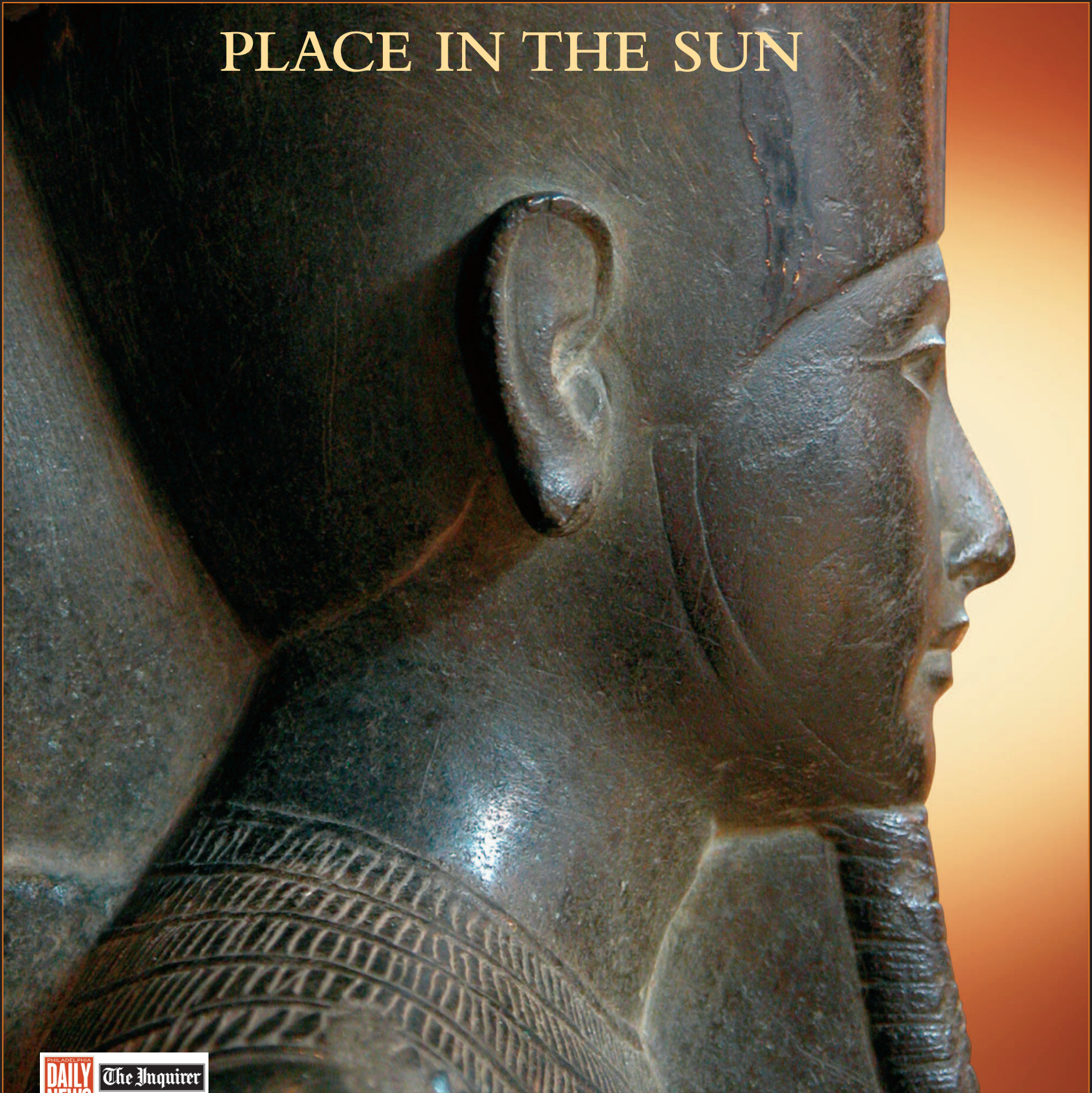


AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S

PLACE IN THE SUN



AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

LOOKING AT ANCIENT EGYPT



Statue of Meryma'at, Thebes, Dra Abu el-Naga, late Dynasty 18 or early Dynasty 19 (1332-1279 BCE), limestone

Meryma'at was a barber in the cult of Amun. The inscription on his kilt is a prayer to that god requesting offerings of food and drink and a happy life for his ka, or life force. Photo: Tom Jenkins.

In ancient Egypt, a rich and strong empire grew on the banks of the Nile – and lasted for over 3,000 years. Under powerful pharaohs, the civilization let people settle down and farm instead of wandering the land in search of food. Once settled, they developed towns and cities, laws and property, religions and temples, art and writing. Mankind began to blossom, create and think in new ways.

Ancient Egypt was an attractive area for people long ago. The Nile River was a source of life in the otherwise dry and sweltering North African desert. Birds, animals and fish could be found to eat. The people of ancient Egypt knew that their lives depended on the Nile. Each summer, the river would flood and carry wet, nutritious earth over the dry land. When the flood ended, people planted crops. Because of the Nile, Egyptians saw life as a cycle. To help understand life and death, they also developed a complex religion with many gods.

Around 3000 BCE, there were two kingdoms in Egypt: the Upper Kingdom in the south, and the Lower Kingdom in the north. At first it doesn't make sense that the Lower Kingdom was in the north, but it was lower when you consider that the Nile flows from south to north, from inland Africa to the Mediterranean Sea. In Egypt, south was upriver, and north was downriver.

In 3100 BCE a southern king names Menes united the two kingdoms into one. This was the beginning of Egypt's wealth and power. Around this time we see signs that hieroglyphic writing was used for communication and keeping records of Egypt's wealth.

This wealth came from two sources: its farmland and the gold of Africa. Because farming in Egypt produced a lot of food, not everyone had to work on the land. Some people could be priests, doctors, lawyers, soldiers and writers. Society became very organized, and this helped Egypt prosper. The gold of Africa came into Egypt from the south. The pharaohs conquered Nubia, which was in modern Sudan, and the gold mines there creat-

ed such wealth for the pharaohs that leaders throughout the world begged them for gold.

Of course, over 3,000 years Egypt went through many changes. Historically, time in ancient Egypt is divided into 32 dynasties, or ruling families. It also is divided into nine periods, each of which is made up of a few dynasties. The periods are The Early Dynastic Period, which began in 2950 BCE; The Old Kingdom; The First Intermediate Period; The Middle Kingdom; The Second Intermediate Period; The New Kingdom; The Third Intermediate Period; The Late Period; and the Greco Roman Period, which ended in 395 CE.

In 30 BCE, Egypt came under control of the Roman Empire. The days of Egypt's power ended, and it was slowly absorbed by the newer and more powerful Roman Empire. It had seemed at times that Egypt's Empire would never end, but as history teaches, no empire is forever.

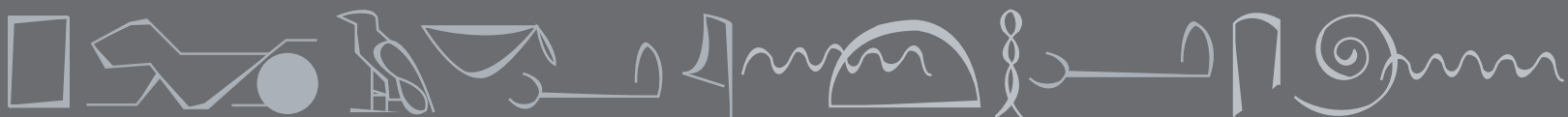
The people and events you will learn about in this special student supplement lived during the 18th Dynasty, which lasted from 1539 to 1292 BCE.

Pharaoh Akhenaten, his beautiful wife Queen Nefertiti, and his son Tutankamun were all part of this dynasty. During this time one of the most dramatic changes in Egypt took place: Akhenaten built a new city, Amarna, for a god named the Aten, and outlawed all other gods. The Amarna period, sometimes called "The Amarna Experiment," resulted in some of the best-known art, tombs, writing and records of ancient Egypt. That is why, even though the period was only around 30 years long, it is one of the most famous in Egyptian history.

ACTIVITY

IN THE NEWS

We are constantly discovering things about the past. A civilization, an important document or the memory of a person's life can fade away until someone rediscovers it. Look through your newspaper and find a story about a rediscovery. Read the story and then write a paragraph on how this rediscovery is valuable, and what it can teach us.



AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

AKHENATEN'S NEW WORLD

“SEE AKHETATEN,
WHICH THE SUN DISK
WISHES TO HAVE
BUILT FOR HIMSELF.”

- Inscription of Akhenaten's words
on the founding of Akhetaten,
now called Amarna.

Imagine you could have the power to shape the world around you to build a city, change a religion and live as the representative of god on earth. It's hard for people today to think of this kind of power, but it was the power that Pharaoh Akhenaten wielded in Egypt during the Amarna period.

During his rule, from 1353 to 1336 BCE, Akhenaten changed Egyptian life in a big way. He moved the capital city of Egypt from Thebes to Amarna, then known as Akhetaten, a city he constructed on what had been just a piece of desert. There he created a new religion, new religious leaders and new temples. His influence lived on beyond his death.

You may know that throughout their history, ancient Egyptians worshipped many gods and goddesses. These deities each had histories and Egyptians believed they interacted with each other. Together, they were believed to influence everything from health to rainfall to the afterlife.

Everyday Egyptians kept images of the gods and goddesses in their homes, and communicated with them. Making offerings, celebrating religious holidays and preparing complex funerals were all a part of Egyptians' constant interactions with their gods.

Akhenaten was born into this world of many gods. At that time, Amun Re was the most important of the Egyptian's gods. Amun Re was a mysterious god with many abilities, but he appeared to the people as the sun. A powerful group of priests served Amun-Re.

When Akhenaten became king around 1353 BCE, he began to make changes. He declared that there was only one god who could be worshipped - the Aten — and he declared that as the pharaoh he was the only person who could communicate with this god.

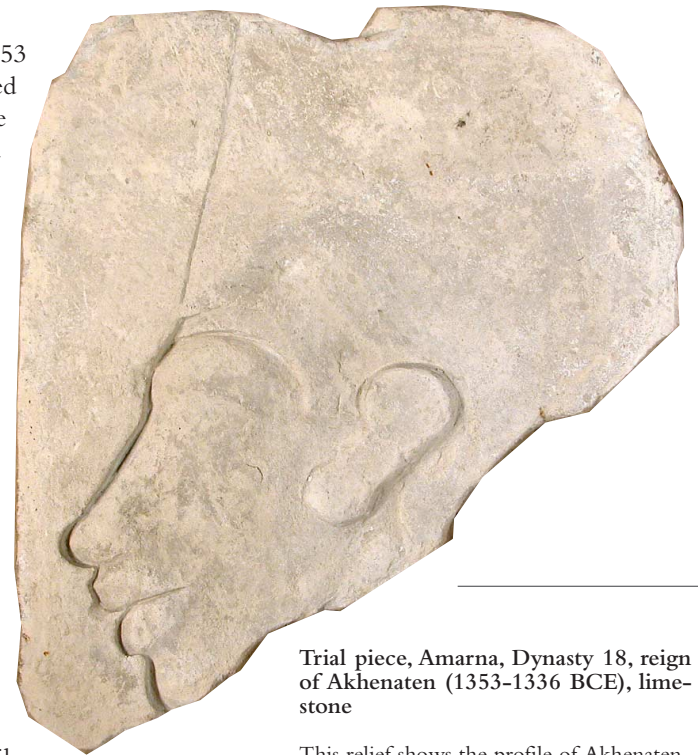
Why did Akhenaten make this huge change? Some people think he wanted to get rid of the powerful priests of Amun Re, whose power could challenge the pharaoh's. Other people think that Akhenaten was totally dedicated to the Aten, and that he was one of the first people in history to express unique and personal thoughts on spirituality.

The Aten literally meant “the disk of the sun.” Akhenaten searched for a place to build a new city for the Aten. He found it in a spot where the sun appeared to rise from an eastern valley and spread its light over a broad piece of land in front of the Nile river. The new city was named Amarna, “horizon of the Aten.”

The pharaoh lived at Amarna with his family. As a result, all the government officials, artists, builders and families who served the king moved there, too. Life in Amarna revolved around the Aten.

As the population grew, the city stretched north and south along the Nile, which was the source of water for the wells the people of Amarna dug into the desert. Official royal buildings and the temples of the Aten were concentrated in the heart of the city. Suburbs, where most people lived, surrounded the center of the city.

Of course, daily life went on for the Egyptian people. They farmed, fished and built as they had for hundred of years. The king, his wives and children went about their daily lives, but the family had a new significance in the new religion. Instead of the many statues of gods the people had been used to seeing when worshipping in the past, the king's family were now Egyptians' visible link to god. In sculpture, at important events, and even traveling around the city, the pharaoh's family were not only royalty or representatives of gods on earth: they were the people's only link to god.

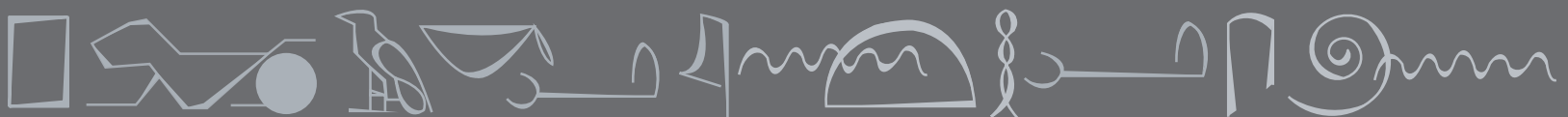


Tril piece, Amarna, Dynasty 18, reign of Akhenaten (1353-1336 BCE), limestone

This relief shows the profile of Akhenaten. Traces of ink outlines remain. While the earliest periods of his reign show figures with very exaggerated features, these details quickly become more natural. Photo: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

ACTIVITY IN THE NEWS

Symbols of power are still very important today. Look through the newspaper for pictures you think show symbols of power. Find and cut out at least three symbols. Then, write a sentence on what the symbol is, and how it shows power. Share a symbol with your class. Finish by drawing a symbol you could use to show a power or skill you have.



AMARNA

SIGNS OF THE KINGS' POWER

In a world without television, radio or computers, how would you know who was leading your country, and what he or she was doing?

This was the situation in ancient Egypt, where pharaohs came to the throne and ruled a large country filled with people who would probably never even see their king. The pharaohs communicated their messages of power and protection to people through artwork and symbols.

Pharaohs built monuments, temples and tombs that were covered with carved images. These pictures showed scenes even an Egyptian with no education could understand, and used a few key symbols that all people were familiar with.

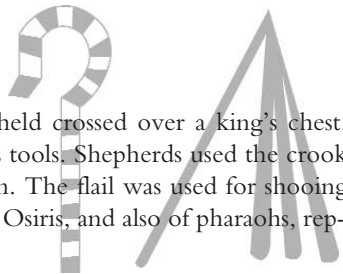
This is why symbols were so important in ancient Egypt: they allowed the pharaohs to represent their authority to the people they ruled. Here are some symbols used by pharaohs and what they meant:

“GOLD IS LIKE DUST
IN THE COUNTRY
OF YOUR SON.”

- Letter from the King of Mittani to Akhenaten's mother, Queen Tiye

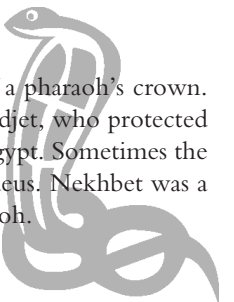
The Crook and Flail

The crook and flail usually appear together, often held crossed over a king's chest. These symbols probably were inspired by shepherd's tools. Shepherds used the crook to guide, catch or rescue sheep, as well as to lean on. The flail was used for shooing flies and as a whip. They became symbols of the god Osiris, and also of pharaohs, representing power over and protection of the people.



The Uraeus

The uraeus (yoo-REE-es) was a circle of metal often worn on top of a pharaoh's crown. It showed a cobra rearing up to strike. The cobra was the goddess Wadjet, who protected the Pharaoh and destroyed his enemies. She was a goddess of Lower Egypt. Sometimes the cobra is paired with a vulture goddess Nekhbet on the front of the uraeus. Nekhbet was a goddess of upper Egypt, and was a mother-like protector of the Pharaoh.



The Nemes Crown

The nemes crown was a piece of cloth tied around the head, with two pieces hanging down on either side of the face. This crown is probably the best known of all the crowns, because King Tut is shown wearing one on his beautiful gold sarcophagus.



The Ankh

The ankh (ANK) was the Egyptian hieroglyph for life. Gods and kings are often seen holding this symbol, which looks like a cross with a rounded end.



The Red Crown

The red crown is the crown of Lower Egypt.



The White Crown

The white crown is the crown of Upper Egypt.



The Double Crown

The double crown is the white and red crowns worn together, representing the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, which happened around 3100 BCE.



The Blue Crown

The blue crown appears in art later than all the other crowns of Egypt. It was probably a war crown, because tomb paintings show it worn in battles.



AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

EGYPT'S TRADITIONAL GODS



Amun Re

Amun Re was the sun god. He was the king of the gods, and was created when the idea of two separate gods, Amun and Re, became one over time. Amun means “the hidden one,” and represents a power that is everywhere in the universe, but cannot be seen. Re represents the sun as it appears in the sky, and was most often shown as a man with a ram’s head crowned by the sun. Over time, Amun Re became thought of as the chief of the gods. During the New Kingdom he became even more important, and people believed that he was the source of all other gods, and the only force of creation in the universe. During this period and the Amarna period Egyptians came closer to the practice of monotheism, or the worship of only one god, than they ever had before.

Amun Re was important to all Egyptians, from the pharaoh to the most common person. Myth said that Amun Re was the pharaoh’s father, and that he ruled Egypt through the pharaoh. Yet this god was not only concerned with politics and powerful people. Normal Egyptians were free to worship him and to ask him for help, because he was concerned with order and justice in the universe, from the largest to smallest detail.

The Aten

The Aten was the round sun as you see it in the sky. Unlike other Egyptian gods, the Aten was never shown as a person or animal: its only image was the sun, sometimes carved with hands extending downward as rays. This god existed before the Amarna period, but it was Akhnaten who made the Aten the only god worshipped in Egypt. This was a huge change for the people of Egypt. Before Amarna,

all people in Egypt could worship any of the close to 2,000 small and large gods of Egyptian myth. When Akhenaten made the Aten the only god, he also made it a god that only the pharaoh and his family could worship or communicate with. Egyptian people’s only connection with the Aten was through the pharaoh.

Osiris

Osiris was the god of the dead. A former king, he was betrayed, killed, and cut into pieces by his evil brother, Seth. Their sisters Isis and Nephthys found the pieces of the body and put the pieces back together as a mummy. Osiris is drawn as a mummy with arms crossed. Isis also became the wife of Osiris, and had a son with him named Horus. When Seth heard of Horus he searched for him to kill him, but Isis hid him until he was old enough to challenge Seth. A long battle followed, but Horus finally beat Seth and became king. When Horus became king, Osiris came too his position as king of the dead. Instead of this being a sad job, Osiris was viewed as a peaceful god who held the possibility of eternal life for ancient Egyptians.

Isis

Isis was the goddess sister and wife of Osiris. She appears in drawings as a beautiful woman holding an ankh, a symbol of life. Her work healing Osiris and her devotion to her son Seth made Isis a very popular goddess who was worshipped in Egypt and throughout north Africa. She was the most widely worshipped of all the Egyptian goddesses.

Horus

Horus was the son of Osiris and Isis. He defeated his father’s killer, Seth, and became a king of Egypt. Horus was god of the sky. Like Amun Re, he was also a god of kings.

Statue of Sekhmet, Thebes (Ramesseum), Dynasty 18, reign of Amenhotep III (1390-1353 BCE), granodiorite

Sekhmet was a warlike and protective goddess. Her imagery often accompanied the pharaoh into battle. With her fiery arrows, she could send plagues and other diseases against her (and Pharaoh’s) enemies. The Egyptians also asked her to ward off or cure diseases. Photo: Tom Jenkins.



AMARNA



Figurine of Ptah, Memphis, Dynasty 18, reign of Amenhotep III - Tutankhamun (1390-1322 BCE), polychrome faience

Ptah, the god of creation and rebirth, appears seated on a low-back throne. Brilliantly colored and designed as part of a larger statue, this figurine was likely set up in a shrine or temple at Memphis.
Photo: Tom Jenkins.

Bastet

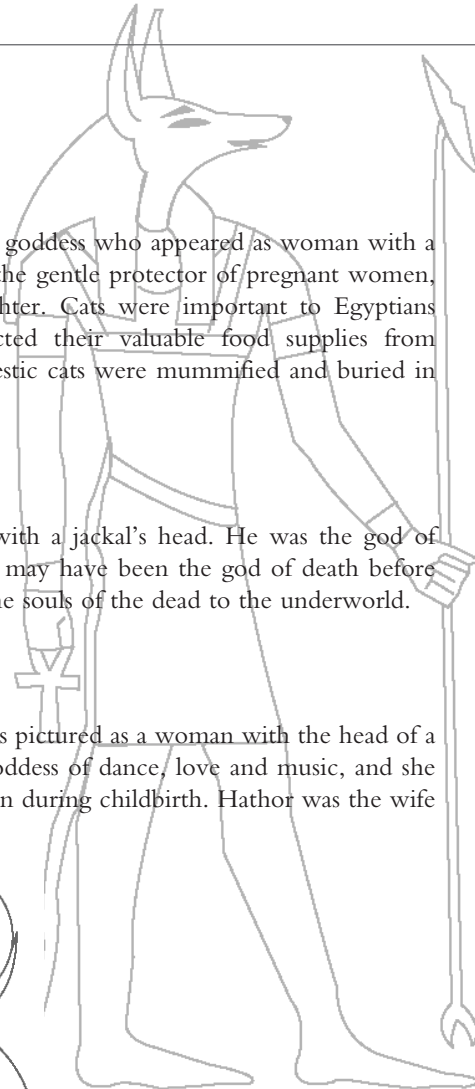
Bastet was a popular goddess who appeared as woman with a cat's head. She was the gentle protector of pregnant women, but also a fierce fighter. Cats were important to Egyptians because they protected their valuable food supplies from rodents. Many domestic cats were mummified and buried in temples of Bastet.

Anubis

Anubis was a man with a jackal's head. He was the god of mummification, and may have been the god of death before Horus. Anubis led the souls of the dead to the underworld.

Hathor

Hathor was a goddess pictured as a woman with the head of a cow. She was the goddess of dance, love and music, and she also protected women during childbirth. Hathor was the wife of Horus.



Thoth

Thoth was the scribe of the gods, and known as the inventor of writing. He was also a moon god. Thoth is one of the most distinctive-looking of the ancient Egyptians' gods. He is shown as a man with the head of an ibis: a bird with a long, thin beak. Thoth recorded the decision when a person's heart was weighed after death.

Maat

Maat was the goddess of the balance of the universe. She stood for truth and order, and was drawn as a woman wearing an ostrich feather on her head. This feather was important when a person's heart was weighed after death. The heart was placed on one side of a scale, and Maat's feather on another. If the person had led a bad life, their heart would not balance Maat's feather, and the heart would be fed to the monster Ammut.



"HOMAGE TO
THEE, OSIRIS,
LORD OF
ETERNITY,
KING OF THE
GODS, WHOSE
NAMES ARE
MANIFOLD,
WHOSE FORMS
ARE HOLY."

-Hymn to Osiris from
The Book of the Dead,
1240 BCE.

ACTIVITY

IN THE NEWS

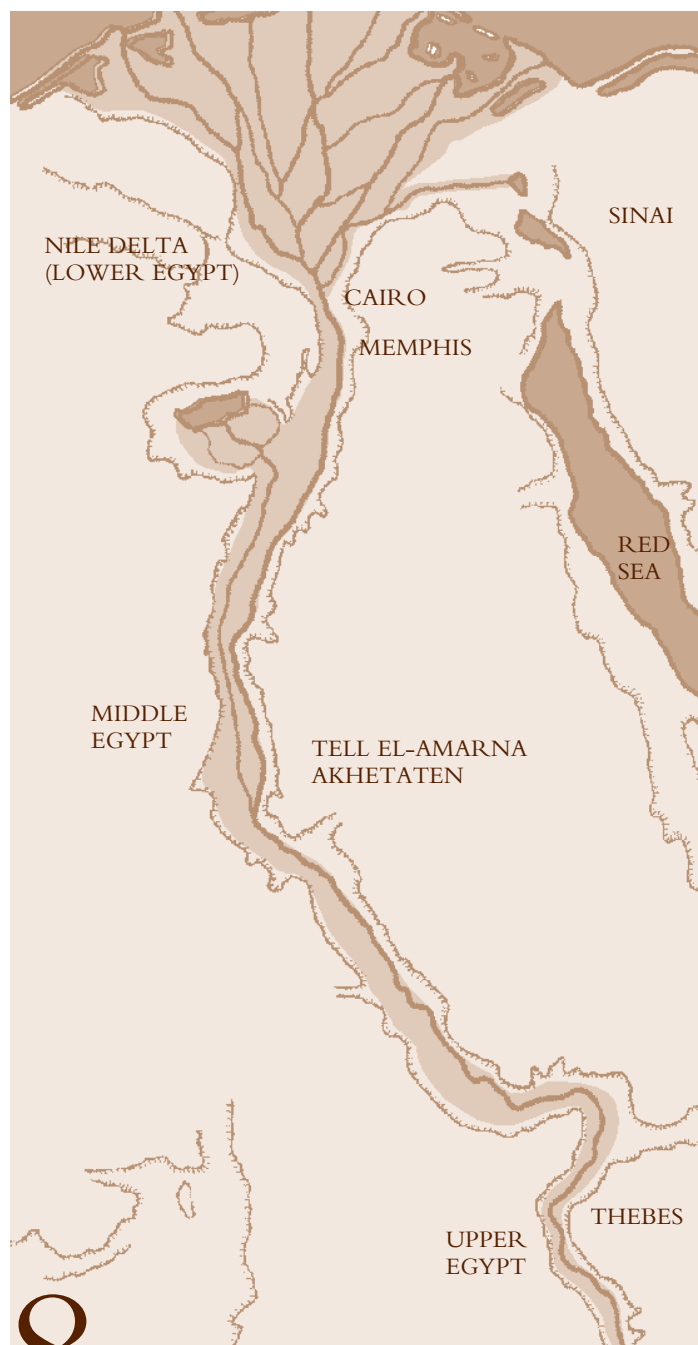
Religion was important to ancient Egyptians, as it is important to many modern people. Look through the newspaper for a story about religion. Read it and write a paragraph summarizing the story. Then, write down three ways the religion in your news story is different from that of ancient Egyptians, and three ways in which it is similar.

AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S

Learning from art and artifacts

From jewelry to statues to hieroglyphs carved on monuments or scarabs, the ancient Egyptians' desire to decorate, beautify and record this world and the next has left us a surprisingly large record of their culture. Even though the Egyptian empire ended more than 2,000 years ago, through their art and writing we learn that today we still have things in common with these ancient people. Just like us, they liked gold, beauty, a good meal, being in love and spending time with friends. Look at the objects on this page to learn more about Egyptians through their arts.



UPI Newspictures

King Tutankhamun

Better known as King Tut, King Tutankhamun ruled Egypt for only 10 years, from 1332 to 1322 BCE. Tut was about 19 years old when he died. For years, people wondered why he died so young, and if he was murdered. A recent computer scan of his mummy shows a seriously broken leg. It is now believed he may have died from an infection in the broken leg, but we may never know for sure. Tut could have been poisoned or harmed in a way that the mummy can't show.

His tomb was discovered in 1922, and is one of the very few royal Egyptian tombs that hadn't been robbed entirely of most of its gold. An incredible number of gold artifacts and jewelry were found there, including the one above.



ZUMA Press

PLACE IN THE SUN

Nefertiti

Nefertiti jumps out at us from history thanks to this sculpture, which was found in the abandoned Amarna workshop of the sculptor Tuthmosis by German archaeologists in 1912. Her name means “The beautiful woman has come,” but she stood out in her time for her power as well as her beauty. Ancient carvings show images of Nefertiti killing traditional Egyptian enemies.

Usually, only pharaohs were shown in this powerful and aggressive pose. Nefertiti was Akhenaten’s most important wife, and the mother of six daughters. Historians aren’t sure if she or another of Akhenaten’s wives was the mother of King Tut. This statue is now in a museum in Germany.



**HAIR TRUE LAPIS LAZULI;
ARMS SURPASSING GOLD,
FINGERS LIKE LOTUS BUDS.**

13th century BCE Egyptian Love Poem



Scarabs

Scarabs are small stones carved as beetles. The rounded tops are carved as a beetle’s head, wings and legs, and the bottoms are flat, usually with writing on them. Scarabs were popular charms in ancient Egypt, and people rich and poor wore them for luck and blessings. The writing on scarabs could be a spell, a good-luck wish, or a name used as a seal. The scarab could be pressed into wet clay or wax, leaving its mark and showing who had made the seal.

It may seem strange that a beetle would be such an important animal to the Egyptians, especially because scarab beetles are dung beetles. These beetles lay their eggs in balls they make out of animal droppings. They roll the balls around on the ground, which looks especially strange because the balls can become bigger than the beetles themselves. The Egyptians saw the beetle rolling the ball as like the sun god rolling the sun across the sky. The dung beetle became associated with the god of the newly-risen sun, Khepri.

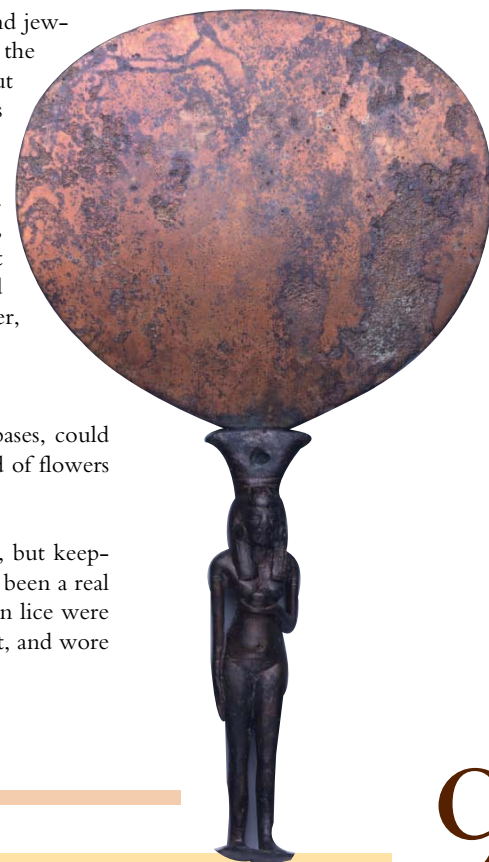
Beauty and Style

Ancient Egyptians loved makeup, hairstyles and jewelry. Of course, over the 3,000 years of the Egyptian Empire, trends came and went, but the people’s focus on beauty and style was always present.

Makeup was an important part of their look. Men and women wore heavy black eyeliner, and women wore blush and lipstick. Different stones and minerals were ground up and mixed with water to make black and green eyeliner, and red blush and lipstick.

Egyptians loved good smells and perfume. Their perfumes, which often used fat or oil bases, could be rubbed into the skin, and probably smelled of flowers and spices.

Long, thick black hair was the Egyptian ideal, but keeping a luxurious head of black hair would have been a real pain in a hot climate, especially in a time when lice were everywhere. People usually cut their hair short, and wore wigs on special occasions.



AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN



Relief with Aten, Amarna, Dynasty 18, reign of Akhenaten (1353-1336 BCE), calcite (Egyptian alabaster)

This relief fragment shows the hands at the ends of the Aten's sun rays, one of the deity's few human features.
Photo: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

The new and only god, the Aten, has no body and no shape but that of the sun in the sky. It cannot be represented as a man or an animal, and only the pharaoh can know the Aten's wishes, or ask the Aten for help.

Around the year 1350 BCE, these new rules were given by Pharaoh Akhenaten to the people of Egypt, and they came as a shock.

During the rule of Akhenaten's father, Amenhotep III, the 2,000 or so gods of ancient Egypt were worshipped widely, but Amun Re was held above the rest. The priests of Amun Re became so powerful that they could even challenge the pharaoh.

ATEN'S SUPREMACY

This wasn't good for the royal family, and within his lifetime Amenhotep III made steps to raise other gods up and control the power of the priests. One of the gods he called attention to was the Aten, a solar god who was represented by an image of the sun in the sky.

When Akhenaten came to the throne, he closed all the gods' temples, including those of Amun Re, and announced that he was moving to a new city. Suddenly, priests had lost all their power. But life didn't change just for the rich and powerful priests.

When the traditional gods were outlawed, everyday Egyptians lost their connection to the spiritual world. Akhenaten proclaimed that he and his family were the only humans capable of communicating with the Aten. If people wanted to communicate with the god, they would have to look to the pharaoh.

Of course, some people weren't happy about all these changes, but they had also been trained for generations to think that the pharaoh was god on Earth. They didn't challenge his changes.

You may hear people say the religion of the Aten is monotheism, which means a religion with only one god. Certainly the religion of the Aten was much closer to monotheism than the religion of the many gods Egyptians had worshipped before. But there is one problem: The people had to worship Akhenaten, his wife Nefertiti and their family as the representatives of the Aten. The royal family would, in turn, worship the Aten. This isn't strictly monotheism as we know it today.

Think of it - what if you had to worship the president, who could then worship god. The Egyptians were used to thinking of their leaders as godly, so it wasn't as strange to them as it would be to you - but they still remembered the old ways.

Around 1346 BCE Akhenaten chose Amarna as the site of a new city to be built for the Aten. All the people whose jobs depended on the pharaoh, from sculptors to builders to government official, left their homes in Thebes and traveled to Amarna to begin a new life under one god. There, temples were built without roofs, so that the sun could be seen in the sky. As you can see from the hymn to the Aten, the Aten was seen as the giver of all life; a kind and protective source of all good.

"WHEN YOU CAST YOUR RAYS, THE HERDS ARE HAPPY IN THEIR PASTURES. TREES AND PLANTS GROW GREEN. ALL THE FLOCKS GAM-BOL AND ALL THE BIRDS COME TO LIFE BECAUSE YOU HAVE RISEN FOR THEM. EVEN THE FISH IN THE RIVERS LEAP TOWARD YOUR FACE. YOU CREATED THE EARTH TO PLEASE YOU - PEOPLE, CATTLE AND FLOCKS, EVERYTHING THAT WALKS ON LAND OR TAKES OFF AND FLIES, USING WINGS." HYMN TO THE ATEN

Did Akhenaten really believe in the Aten, or did he just use the Aten to upset Egypt's power structure and reshape it the way he wanted? Signs show that Akhenaten really did believe in his spiritual connection to the Aten. He composed songs and poems in honor of the god, and sometimes neglected Egypt's well-being and safety in his pursuit of building the perfect home for the Aten. But all of Akhenaten's devotion to the Aten couldn't erase what the people of Egypt had known for hundreds of years.

Soon after Akhenaten's death, Amarna was abandoned and the capital moved to Memphis, where the Aten was turned back into just one of many minor gods.

HOW MANIFOLD
IT IS, WHAT THOU
HAST MADE! THEY
ARE HIDDEN FROM
THE FACE OF MAN.
O SOLE GOD, LIKE
WHOM THERE IS
NO OTHER!

-The Hymn to the Aten



ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

CREATING ART IN AMARNA

Akhenaten set out to build the Aten a city so amazing, rich and beautiful that it put memories of old gods out of mind. He wanted to create a place worthy of his god, and one that would impress his people with the Aten's magnificence.

Because the pharaoh was so wealthy, he could hire as many painters, sculptors and artisans as he wanted – and it seems that a virtual army of artists lived in Amarna during the city's short life.

Egyptians used a great deal of freestanding sculpture, large and small, and also often carved images into rock. These works lasted a long time, and could be placed in public areas as symbols of the pharaoh and the Aten. During the Amarna period, Akhenaten wanted the Egyptian people to stop worshipping the usual gods, and to instead worship the royal family as representatives of the Aten. This made it important to give Egyptians many images of the royal family to look at.

One thing that made ancient Egyptian art different from art today is that it tended to stay the same. Artists didn't develop many new ways of depicting the world. It was considered good to copy the past, so artists painted and carved in the same style for thousands of years. Except in Amarna.

Akhenaten himself developed a new style for showing the human body in art. Instead of the very stiff and straight traditional figures, his were long and curved, with large hips and thin arms. Some people have even wondered if Akhenaten was born with an illness that gave him a strange figure - but now it is believed he was shown in this way as part of the new artistic style.

Family portraits of the royal family, Akhenaten, Nefertiti and their daughters, also changed at this time. In addition to formal, ceremonial pictures, the family was shown playing and relaxing together, holding each other and enjoying life under the rays of the Aten.

One of Amarna's residents was Tuthmosis, the city's chief sculptor. He was in charge of making statues of the royal family. One of the most famous statues in the world, the bust of beautiful queen Nefertiti, was found in his workshop in 1912. Along with this now famous sculpture were around 50 other works of art. How did this treasure trove survive thousands of years in the desert? It seems that

when Amarna was abandoned the sculptor put all his works in storage and shut his house and workshop forever. He had no reason to take sculptures of the royal family with him: They were disgraced, and no one wanted to look at them.

Another important art form used to show the royal family was painting. Most of the best-preserved paintings are found inside tombs, where they have been protected from sun and sand, which would have ruined them. The paintings show gods and funerals, as well as everyday activities like hunting and preparing food.

Less glamorous than sculptors and painters, but more necessary, were potters. In a world before plastic, food and liquids were stored in clay pots. It took skill to make these vessels, which were used by the very rich and the very poor alike.

Beyond functional clay items were ornamental items made of glass and faience (fay-ANS), a kind of earthenware. The artisans who worked with these materials made beautiful and delicate decorations. Because glass and faience shined and gleamed in the sun's light, they were especially popular in Amarna.

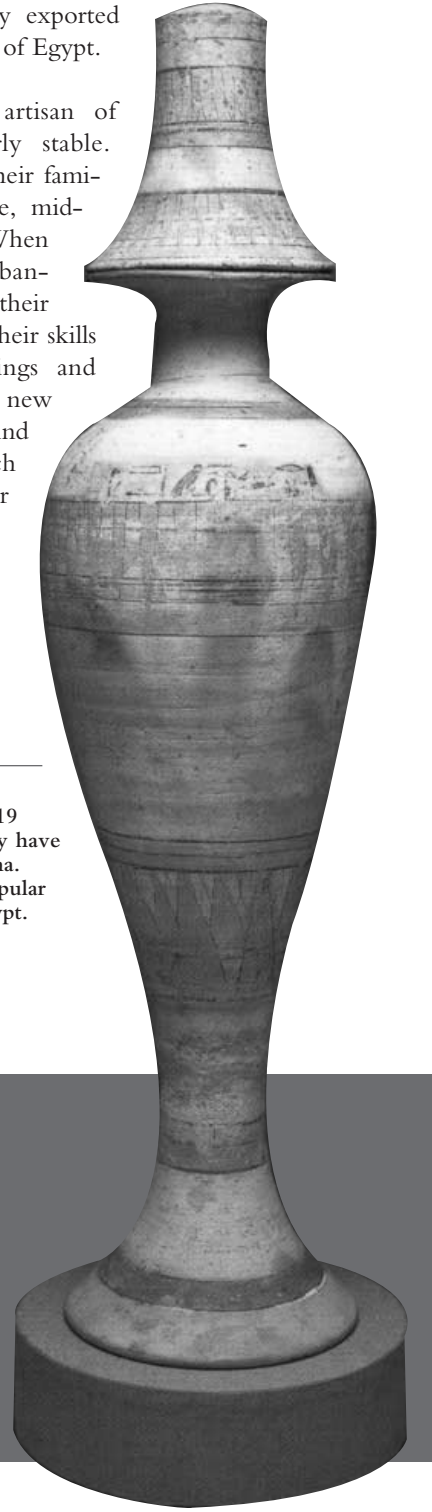
Faience had been used in Ancient Egypt for a long time before the Amarna period. It was earthenware, like clay, but was covered with a smooth, sparkling and colorful glaze.

Glasswork was new to the Egyptians, and they were experimenting with adding color and pattern to their

creations during the Amarna period. Evidence at Amarna shows that artisans made large amounts of glass and faience in the city, so much that some of it was probably exported and traded outside of Egypt.

The life of an artisan of Amarna was fairly stable. Most lived with their families in comfortable, middle-class homes. When Amarna was abandoned, they took their tools and applied their skills to making paintings and sculptures of their new rulers, leaving behind their works, which would be lost for thousands of years.

This Dynasty 18 or 19 ceramic wine jar may have been made in Amarna. Wine was a very popular drink in Ancient Egypt.



ACTIVITY

IN THE NEWS

Look through the newspaper for a story about a modern work of art or a popular craft. Remember, jewelry, dishes and clothing can be considered crafts. Read the story. Write a paragraph describing what your object is, how it is made, and what it is used for. Then, imagine that an archaeologist finds the item from your story 3,000 years from now. Write a second paragraph on what he or she could learn about our world from the item.

AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

A LIFE IN ANCIENT EGYPT

“DO NOT CONTROL YOUR WIFE IN HER HOUSE WHEN YOU KNOW SHE IS EFFICIENT. DO NOT SAY TO HER: ‘WHERE IS IT? GET IT!’ WHEN SHE HAS PUT IT IN THE RIGHT PLACE. LET YOUR EYE OBSERVE IN SILENCE; THEN YOU WILL RECOGNIZE HER SKILL.”

-Advice for a happy marriage from a New Kingdom text.

Children in ancient Egypt were considered a great blessing. Parents hoped to have large families and that their children would support them in old age.

When a child was born, it spent the first few years of life living with its mother and other women in the home. Children were given toys such as balls, dolls and board games. They played outside most of the time and had pet dogs, cats and monkeys. When they were very young, most kids wore no clothes because the weather in Egypt was hot and dry all the time. As they got older, boys would wear a cloth of white linen around their waists, and girls would wear white linen dresses. Many Egyptians, even kids, liked to wear jewelry made of colorfully painted clay beads, stones or gold.

Boys who would become doctors, lawyers, scribes, priests or government officials went to school to learn writing and math. Boys and girls without wealthy or middle-class parents who could afford to train them for a profession probably did not go to school. Only daughters of very wealthy families learned to read and write.

The average lifespan in ancient Egypt was only 40 years. Because they had no antibiotics, simple illnesses killed many people by the time they reached that age. Having children was very dangerous for women, because medicine was not advanced enough to help them if something went wrong with delivery of a baby. Plus, life in general was more dangerous than most people's lives today. Wars, hard physical work and the dangers of hunting could all shorten a person's life. Because of shorter lives, people got married much younger than they do today. Girls were usually married around 14, and boys anywhere

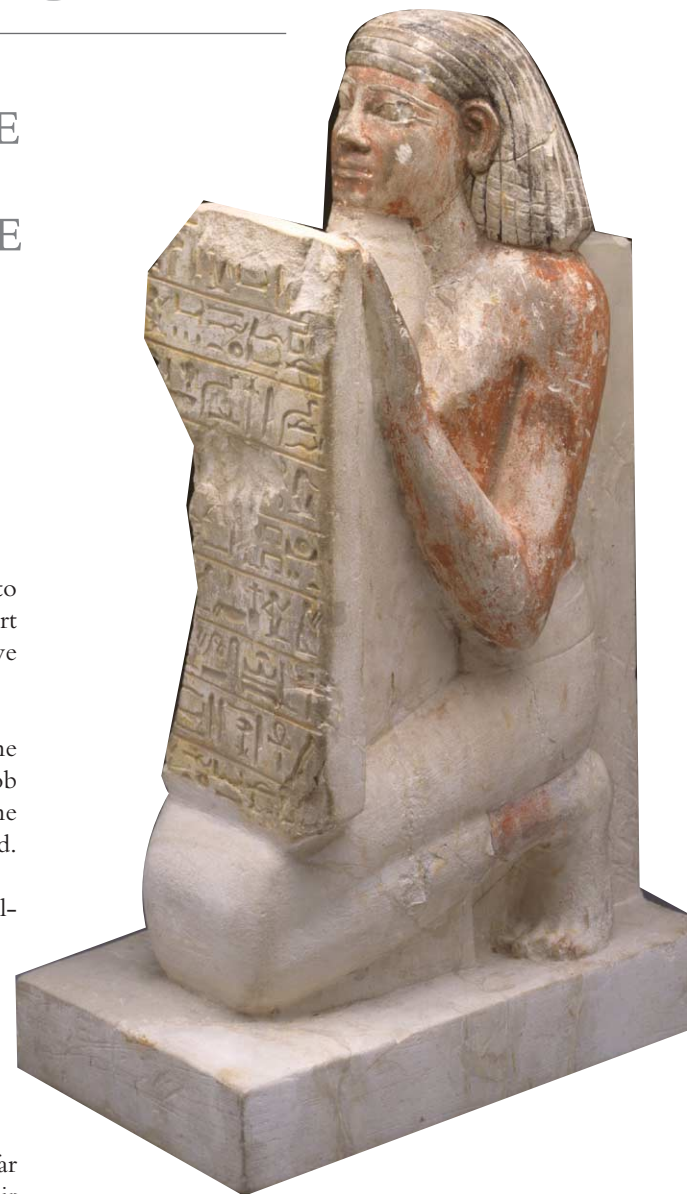
from 15 to 20. Although a man legally was allowed to marry more than one wife, most were only able support one wife. Men like the pharaoh, however, could have hundreds of wives.

Once married, a man had to support his new wife and the children they would have. He usually worked the same job his father had, using skills he had learned as a child. The majority of men worked as farmers, and the work was hard.

Women's first job was to take care of the house and children, which was no small amount of work. Some ancient writings show that Egyptian society valued the work that women did, and saw being a mother as an important job. Some women, mainly those from important royal backgrounds, worked in government or as priestesses.

Egyptians lived along the banks of the Nile, just far enough back that the spring floods would not reach their homes. The homes were made out of mud brick, which was made by mixing mud with sand and straw, shaping it in molds, then leaving it to dry in the sun. Some poor families lived in one-room homes, but it was more common for homes to be one or two stories, with rooms that encircled a courtyard. In the courtyard, women cooked and baked in ovens built there.

Beauty was a very important thing to Egyptians. Many paintings show us that they wore wigs and beautiful jewelry. Men and women lined their eyes with black to cut down on sun glare and to look fashionable. They used perfumes and scented oils, and a rich women might even employ a hairdresser and a makeup artist!



Steleophorus statue, provenance unknown, Dynasty 18, reign of Tuthmosis III-IV (1479-1390 BCE), painted limestone

The deceased Hednakht kneels behind a stela displaying a hymn to the sun god. Photo: Tom Jenkins.

History shows us that Egyptian people had many of the same jobs and responsibilities, and enjoyed many of the same things we do – but most didn't have our opportunity for education and healthy, long lives.



AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

THE GODS RETURN

Tutankhaten, later known as Tutankamun or simply King Tut, was born around 1341 BCE. It was a very strange time in Egyptian history. His father, Pharaoh Akhenaten, had moved the Egyptian capital from Thebes to Amarna and changed Egypt's religion from one of thousands of gods to one of a single god, the Aten.

Akhenaten had many wives, but he had one chief wife, Nefertiti. Together, they had six daughters, but no boy who could take the throne and rule as pharaoh. Tutankaten was probably the son of Akhenaten and one of his other wives, a woman named Kiya.

Life should have been secure for the family, but Akhenaten's actions had put Egypt at risk. He would not wage war against people who were moving in on Egypt's territory because he was too busy creating a city for the Aten. He also angered many of Egypt's common people, who didn't like that he had taken their gods away.

When Tutankhaten was around six years old, his father died. The pharaoh's family was in a bad situation. Tut, who could have become king, was a child, and the country was unstable. A person named Neferneferuaten became pharaoh, but no one knows who he (or she) was. Was it Nefertiti, Akhenaten's queen, using a new name? Neferneferuaten was followed by another mystery pharaoh named Smenkhkare. Combined, they ruled for only four years, and their identities remain hidden.

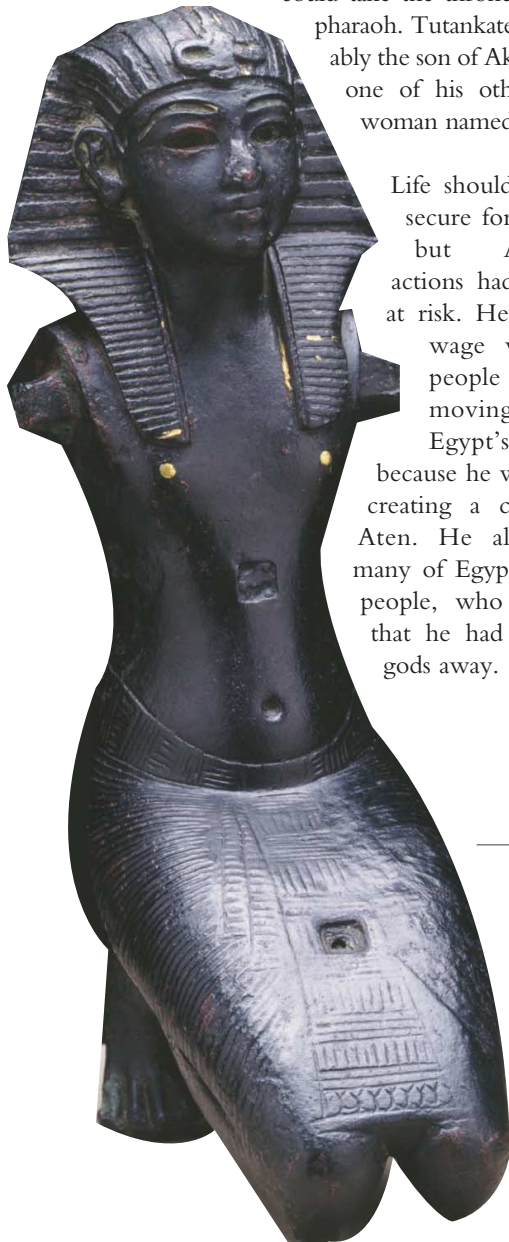
In 1332 BCE Tut and his half-sister, Ankhesenpaaten, became the rulers of Egypt. Even though they were too young for marriage by Egyptian standards, they had been married because together their claim to the throne was stronger than it was separately. They were only around nine years old. Obviously, the two children were under control of the adults in their lives. Nefertiti, Tut's grandmother Tiye, the royal advisor Ay and a general called Horemheb may have all struggled for control of the young couple.

In 1330, two years after they became rulers, Tut and Ankhesenpaaten left Amarna forever. Tut, who had only known his father's city, moved his capital to Memphis, an old city used as a government center. There, he opened the old gods' temples and showered them with gifts and riches. He announced that he would bring back the old ways, and the people were happy about it. In many places outside Amarna, people had never really given up the old gods. The city of Amarna had been in use for only 18 years, from its founding by Akhenaten in 1348 BCE to its abandonment by Tut in 1330.

Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun, and Ankhesenpaaten changed hers to Ankhsenamun. By changing the last four letters of their names from "aten" to "amun," they demonstrated that Amun Re, not the Aten, was again the important god to the royal family. Life went on with the young couple in charge until a sudden tragedy. At around 19 years old, Tut died. It is believed he died from an infection resulting from a broken bone. His early death came as a surprise, and he was buried in a small tomb originally made for someone else. There he would lie, forgotten, until 1922, when the tomb was discovered by a British archaeologist.

Meanwhile, Ankhsenamun was in a dangerous position. Without her husband, her claim to the throne was hard to keep. She made a plan. Ankhsenamun wrote to the king of the Hittites, a group warring with the Egyptians, asking for him to send a prince for her to marry. This was unusual, but could have worked out well for everyone. The king sent a son to marry her, but the prince was murdered on his way to Egypt.

Two men are suspected of the murder: The royal advisor, Ay, and the general, Horemheb. Ay married Queen Ankhsenamun and became pharaoh in 1322 BCE, but died a few years later, in 1319. Ay's death marks the end of the 34-year Amarna Period as it is known by historians. Horemheb then got his chance. He became pharaoh and started a new dynasty. He also tried to erase any memory of the pharaohs who had come right before him, and removed the names of Akhenaten, Neferneferuaten, Smenkhare, Tut and Ay wherever he found them. Amarna and everyone associated with it was wiped from the mind of ancient Egypt.

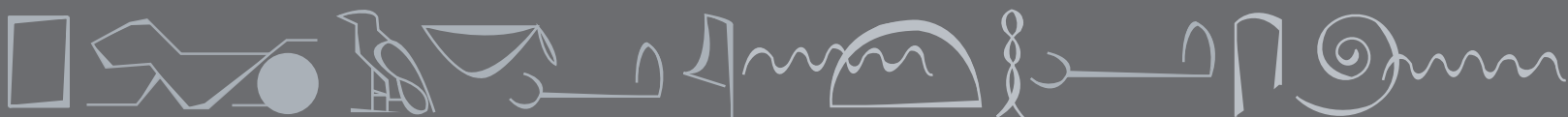


Statuette of Tutankhamun, provenance unknown, late Dynasty 18, reign of a successor of Akhenaten (1332-1322 BCE), bronze with traces of gold Photo: Tom Jenkins.

ACTIVITY

IN THE NEWS

Politics and power were a difficult, sometimes dangerous business in Ancient Egypt, as they can also be today. In your newspaper, find a story about a modern leader who is having problems keeping control of his or her country. Read the story. Then, go online and learn more about the leader. Write a short biography of the leader, including his or her childhood, education, rise to power, and current problems. Add a paragraph suggesting a solution to the problems the leader faces.



AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN



This Shabti is from Dynasty 19. Shabtis were figures placed in tombs. Their purpose was to perform work in the afterlife for the person buried in the tomb.

A JOURNEY AFTER DEATH

Mummies – they’re not only cool to look at: through them we learn about ancient Egyptians’ bodies, culture and religion.

We don’t know exactly why Egyptians began using mummification to preserve bodies before burial, but by 3100 BCE simple mummification had begun. Five-hundred years later, in 2600 BCE, the process had become much more complicated. Organs were being taken out of the body before burial, and chemicals were used to preserve, or embalm, the body.

Around 2700 BCE, a god called Osiris became important as the god of the dead. His link to mummification is clear. The myth of Osiris says he was a king murdered by his jealous brother, Seth, who tore him to pieces. Their sisters, Isis and Nephthys, found the body of Osiris and put him back together by embalming him. Osiris was the god Egyptians looked to for eternal life, and the mummification process became linked with him.

At first, only the rich could afford mummification, but over hundreds of years it became something many people could do. It is clear that people wanted to be mummified after death, and it was seen as an important step for a better afterlife.

Some of the Egyptians’ ideas about death and the afterlife are different from those of today, yet their religion also shares ideas with many modern religions. Many modern religions teach that how you act during life affects what happens to your spirit after you die. The ancient Egyptians believed this too, but they also thought that how a person was buried was extremely important to what happened in the afterlife. This belief led to the huge investment ancient Egyptian people put into their tombs and funerals.

Commonly, a person would have his tomb constructed and prepared during life. After death, the mummification process took about two months. First, the brain and internal organs, except the heart, were removed. The heart was left in place because when the deceased went to be judged, it was believed the heart would be placed on a scale and weighed against the feather of Maat, goddess of the balance of the universe.

After the organs were removed, they were either wrapped in linen or placed in special jars called canopic jars. Then the body was treated with natron, a salt that dries out tissue. It was this dryness that preserved the body so well. The body was then coated in resin and wrapped in linen during a complex ritual of prayer.

One of the reasons the burial process was so important is that Egyptians believed several parts of a person lived on and had

needs after death. Egyptians didn’t see a person as made up of just a body and a soul. Their beliefs involved more pieces.

After death, Egyptians thought a person’s mummy rested in the tomb. A form of the person who died, the ba, could travel out into the world during the day but would come back to take care of the mummy at night. Separately, the akh, or spirit, would be judged and if found worthy gain a place among the gods forever. Finally, the ka was an energy that was separated from a person during life, but returned at death. The ka needed special steps taken during burial so that it could live in the afterlife.

“TO SPEAK
THE NAME
OF THE
DEAD IS TO
MAKE HIM
LIVE AGAIN.”

-Ancient Egyptian
tomb inscription

ACTIVITY IN THE NEWS

In ancient Egypt only wealthy men learned to read and write. Look through your newspaper and find the opinion and editorial section. Read the letters. Then, imagine you live in ancient Egypt, and want to write a letter to your local newspaper on why women and men who are not wealthy should be taught to read and write. Be sure to give at least three reasons for your belief, and support them all with examples and explanations.



AMARNA

ANCIENT EGYPT'S PLACE IN THE SUN

THE WRITTEN ART



“BE A SCRIBE!
YOUR BODY WILL
BE SLEEK, YOUR
HAND WILL BE
SOFT. YOU WILL
NOT BE LIKE A
HIRED OX.”

—From a book by scribe
Nebmare-nakht, 12th
or 11th century BCE.

When we write we use symbols to represent sounds. The ancient Egyptians did the same, but their symbols, called hieroglyphics (HI-er-oh-GLIFF-iks), were more complicated and artistic than ours.

Egyptian hieroglyphics, which were used for around 3,000 years, were in use by the time Upper and Lower Egypt joined in 3100 BCE. It's not known how the Egyptians developed hieroglyphics, but they probably got the basic idea through trade with the Sumerians. The Sumerians, in what is today Iraq, also had developed a writing system that used pictures to represent sounds.

Hieroglyphic writing didn't stay exactly the same for thousands of years. By the Old Kingdom period, a less complicated writing style called hieratic developed. Later, a form that used even more simplified symbols—demotic—was used.

Ancient Egyptian people who wrote were called scribes. Being a scribe was a prestigious job, like being a doctor or lawyer. The scribes learned how to write at special

schools. Most Egyptian people did not know how to read or write, or knew only basic symbols. Only boys who were training to be scribes, or children from wealthy families, would learn to read and write. Extremely few women could do so.

Hieroglyphics were carved on the walls of temples and tombs as part of grand monuments, but they were also used to keep records on taxes, wills and lists of belongings. They were carved in stone, or written on clay or papyrus.

It is hard to believe that the language and writing of a civilization as strong and long-lasting as that of ancient Egypt could be forgotten, but it was. The last evidence we have of hieroglyphic writing comes from 450 CE. It is believed that as Christian Greeks came to control Egypt, hieroglyphic writing was banned because it was closely tied with Egypt's polytheistic religion. The Greeks gave the Egyptians a new alphabet, called Coptic, which used letters from the Greek alphabet. The ancient Egyptian language became called Coptic, but this language was doomed to extinction.

With the spread of Islam throughout North Africa, the Coptic language was replaced by Arabic. By 1100 CE neither Egyptian writing or language were used.

But the Coptic language did live on in one form: in the text of the Coptic Church. This survival of the language in the church would eventually be the key to understanding hieroglyphics.

Once the meaning of hieroglyphics was forgotten, people became curious about what the pictures meant. Scholars assumed that they were simple picture writing, meaning that a picture of a tree represented a tree, or a picture of a dog represented a dog. But this theory didn't help crack hieroglyphics. The difficulty of understanding hieroglyphics was made worse by the fact that people had no idea what language they could be based on.

In 1799, the French army discovered the Rosetta Stone. The stone had the same message carved on it in Greek, demotic and hieroglyphics. Researchers could finally match up Greek, a language they understood, with hieroglyphics.

In 1790, a child was born who would solve the hieroglyphic question. Jean-Francois Champollion was interested in Egypt from the time he was a young boy.

He wanted to know what the hieroglyphics meant, and when he found out that no one could tell him, he vowed to solve the problem himself.

Champollion was convinced that hieroglyphics were phonetic, meaning the symbols represent sounds instead of representing ideas as most other people thought. He also brought a special skill to his work: he spoke Coptic, which he had learned from church texts. He realized that the hieroglyphic symbols stood for sounds in the Coptic language.

He learned many things about hieroglyphics, including that some symbols represented a single sound, while other represented a group of sounds, or even a whole word. For example, in hieroglyphics the symbol of a falcon represents the sound “m,” while a symbol of the sun represents the sound “ra.” These signs could be used to spell words, like the beginning of the name of the pharaoh Ramses.

Another thing Champollion discovered was there are no hieroglyphic symbols that represent just a vowel. The vowel sound had to be implied, like the “a” in “ra.” Champollion translated many hieroglyphic texts, and even though he died at 42 years old he left the world a renewed understanding of an ancient script.

Being able to understand hieroglyphics has given modern people a much greater appreciation of ancient Egyptian life. It lets us in on stories as great as those of huge battles, as personal as love poems, and as ordinary as laundry lists, all by a people who began writing things down over 5000 years ago.

